

Pieces of Eight

Volume 1 Issue 3

March 27, 2003

Rota, Spain



A word from the CO

We've been here six weeks now and just this week received our last group of personnel. This highly motivated group has been a nice shot in the arm for all of us who have been here. They arrived here safely on Tuesday, March 25th and came from NH Bremerton, NMC San Diego, NH Lemoore and NH Camp Pendleton. It's great to see so many familiar, friendly faces.

Before I talk about what we've been doing, I want to thank all of you for your support. We've been getting cards, Girl Scout cookies, gag gifts and a variety of other treats. While there's no shortage of food here, it's nice to know you're thinking of us. I want to specifically thank Command Master Chief Lopez, and our ombudsmen, Linda Thralls and Will Lewis. Tales of how you've helped families abound as we get new people here. I recognize that this is all-volunteer, all your time, and thank you for giving it freely to support our families there.

We've transitioned from training to taking care of patients and building our new site. We've received many patients, and you'd all be proud of how professional the entire staff has been. This reinforces the importance of our mission here and the value of our hard work in getting to where we are. In a recent press interview, I was asked why we treat patients in a tent when there's a fixed facility nearby. I could state proudly and without hesitation that our care is on par with care received anywhere. It's not the brick and mortar surrounding the building, but our excellent doctors, nurses, corpsmen and support staff that makes our patient care second to none.

One of the beauties of living and working together 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is to watch people going through personal change and growth. One of our Seabees, CM2 Lance Harper from CBU-418 in Bangor, received news of the birth of his new baby and was beaming from ear to ear. You don't always get to see that at home, but when you live and work together, all that becomes a bigger part of daily life.

I want to ensure you all again that we're fine, doing what we were trained to do and doing it extremely well. This is the quality of the people we have here. I don't mean to brag, but this staff is worth bragging over. Thanks again to all of you for supporting us.

CAPT Pat Kelly
CO, FH-8

What do you want to see in this newsletter?

If you have a suggestion or a request regarding the content of this newsletter, please contact JO1(SW) Stacey Moore at smoore@fh08.navy.mil.

Functional Area: Ward 2

Greetings from Ward 2!

Wives, husbands, children, friends, fiancés and pets have been left behind, and the Ward 2 family has been born. Between the 21 people who comprise our staff, there are 12 who left behind children to support Operation Enduring Freedom. Lt. Heath Morgan, an internal medicine physician and his wife Crystal are also expecting a second child. He is hopeful to be present at the birth. While we are all missing family and the luxuries of our own beds and bathrooms, we are doing you proud.

The Ward 2 patient care team



Our mission is to provide medical and psychiatric care to the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines of Operation Enduring Freedom. We worked hard to assemble our functional area, inventory and set up the equipment, and make the ward our own. We have received our first patients and are continuously learning better ways to do things.

Dr. Kirk "Gleam" Gasper and Dr. Heath "the Heater" Morgan are our Ward Medical Officers. They have been invaluable resources to the enlisted staff and nurses who are less familiar with the medical conditions we may encounter. Lt. Cmdr. Gasper is a family practice physician, and his wife Michelle is an active duty pediatrician at Naval Hospital Bremerton.

There are five nurses led by Cmdr. Stephens. They are Cmdr. (s) Stensrud, Lt. Cmdr. Lake, Lt. Cmdr. Murray, and Lt. Hunt. We are looking forward to Cmdr. (s) Stensrud's August promotion and subsequent wetting-down. (Hopefully we will be receiving long-distance invitations to attend!)

Thirteen Hospital Corpsmen from Naval Medical Center San Diego and Naval Hospital Bremerton are led by HMC(SW) Timothy "Bubba" Stewart. Our LPO is HM2(FMF/PJ) Duncan, with HM3 Morton, HM3 West, HM3 Bruer, HM3 Nunez, HM3 Richards, HM3 Au, HN Luna, HN Sandau, HN Bradford, HN Jones, HN Hawkins, HN Robinson, and HA Gonzales. All advancement eligible personnel have been studying hard and recently took their advancement exams. We are hoping to hear the good news in May that they will be advanced!

We are safe, our basic needs are being met, and we are proud to be serving our country and preserving our freedoms and those of our children. We look forward to being reunited with all of you!

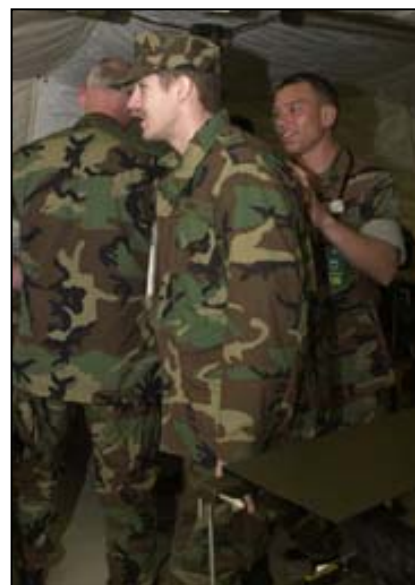
Fleet Hospital Eight recently conducted one of many casualty receiving drills. During the drills, patients, played by fleet hospital staff members, were brought through the hospital for practice. During this particular drill, Ward 2 received several patients with various needs.



An observer/coach for the team plugged in data, while some of the staff worked hard at acting as pre-existing patients on the ward.



All incoming ambulatory patients are escorted to the ward and met at by the corpsmen and taken to a bed and made as comfortable as possible.





Once the patients are in the ward, their vitals are taken by the corpsmen on duty, and they get their preliminary evaluation.



After the patients' vital signs are taken, the doctors and nurses work closely together to formulate a plan of care for the patients.



Ward 2 has been busy over the last couple of weeks. They've started receiving patients and using their training to care for patients from the field.

Moving forward...

Fleet Hospital Eight has made some remarkable strides, taking their training to the next level of receiving patients, conducting surgery, and welcoming and integrating the second and third wave of new arrivals. The Seabees have been building signs, putting up the tents to house all the new staff, prepping the new site and unloading the ship that brought the 250 bed fleet hospital to Rota, Spain. With all of the recent activity, though, the staff has pretty much settled into daily routines and made the camp and hospital their home away from home.



A Seabee stands next to the Fleet Hospital Eight sign he created for the hospital.



Surgeons prepare the hand of the first Fleet Hospital Eight surgical patient.



While the hospital staff was treating patients, they were also greeting the second and third wave of new arrivals.



The new arrivals were greeted by members of their functional areas and others who were happy to welcome the fresh faces and new enthusiasm.



They were also briefed by Capt. Kelly and given the basic rules of the deployed fleet hospital.

They were issued the ever-so-important stickers that allowed access to all the facilities on the base.



Part of any troop movement includes the transport of organizational gear. The Seabees pitched in with their trucks and personnel to move the heavy boxes.



The Seabees of Fleet Hospital Eight spent several days building level wooden floors for the tents in which some of our staff live. The tents are lined up next to the sea huts.



Even with all of the hard work, we've kept our sense of humor.

Fleet Hospital held an awards ceremony on the 7th of March recognizing staff members for their performance at home in Bremerton and here in Spain.



The Padre's Message:
27 March 2003

Dear Shipmates, Families and Friends,

Well, after all the preparations, planning and waiting, the true reality of our mission has arrived. God has blessed us with the privilege of caring for some very honorable, courageous, and committed young men and women of our Marine Corps, Navy, Army and Air Force. I want to tell all of you that as a priest and chaplain I am so proud to be the chaplain for Naval Hospital Bremerton and now Fleet Hospital Eight.

All of you have sacrificed so much, and continue to each day, in order that we might be here on this mission of medical and spiritual care and compassion. We sacrifice, and I must admit, sometimes complain, but now we all know the reason why. It's all about something we have been practicing back in Bremerton, "Caring...for Life."

I look into the eyes of these mostly young men and women and I see mixed emotions of happiness of being alive and wondering about whether their friends are alive or dead. Although I was not there with them in battle, I can see it being replayed in their minds eye, and perhaps, I at times am blessed and privileged to share the story of where they have been. But in all of it, I see gratefulness for being alive, for being cared for by all of us here at Fleet Hospital Eight.

I pray each day for all of us here, for all of you there and for all of our brothers and sisters who are so valiantly fighting for the cause of freedom and an end to terrorism in our world. War must sometimes be seen as the lesser of evils, which we must engage in to obtain the greatest good, namely, fullness of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for ourselves and our brothers and sisters around the world.

I pray that here in Rota, Spain and back in Bremerton, Washington we join our hearts and minds in prayer that we may see ourselves as one with those in battle. Know that when we touch the body and soul of these noble men and women we do it with your hand in ours.

God continue to bless our mission... Caring Hands, Warrior Hearts... Caring for Life.

Padre

Father Trapani